



Laboratory, Northern New Mexico College launch radiation protection course to help fill high-demand jobs

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To meet the high demand for radiological control technicians (RCTs), Los Alamos National Laboratory and Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) will begin offering a newly-expanded associate degree program in Radiation Protection for an initial cohort of 40 area students this June. The degree is a gateway to well-paying jobs in key mission areas at the Laboratory.

“This new collaborative program with Los Alamos provides our students a clear path to well-paid jobs at the Lab,” said Rick Bailey, president of Northern New Mexico College. “Because the NNMC-LANL program provides area residents with access to in-demand jobs that are often difficult to fill, this new collaboration delivers a win-win solution for both the community and the Laboratory.”

RCTs play a vital role in all Laboratory activities above a certain hazard level, where they must be present to actively monitor contamination levels, verify dose rates for areas and people, ensure compliance with federal and Laboratory policies and procedures, and complete the associated documentation.

“The Laboratory needs trained radiological control technicians so we can carry out our crucial operations safely, and we see a strong demand for these positions into the future,” said Thom Mason, the Laboratory’s director. “We’re very excited to collaborate with Northern New Mexico College in Española to build an education program to prepare area residents to do this work.”

The curriculum will follow Laboratory and U.S. Department of Energy training requirements for RCTs, with the Lab providing technical staff to take part in instruction. The Laboratory, which is funding the program, will offer some competitive internship opportunities to students to work at the Laboratory while they are pursuing the two-year program.

Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, Kate O’Neill, notes that this partnership demonstrates how “collaboration between higher education institutions and regional employers can ensure that students acquire meaningful education and training that leads directly to productive careers that keep them engaged in their communities.”

The five-year agreement follows a successful pilot program, which has already seen students trained at NNMC take positions at the Laboratory.

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